



NAQCC News

Mar 1, 2008

[NAQCC Web Site](#)

Issue #065

In this issue:

1. March Challenge.
2. February Sprint Results
3. Featured Award of the Month
- 3a. Latest Award Winners
4. General Club News
5. Member News

1. CHALLENGE: Our March challenge is not really all that much of a challenge, unless you set yourself a goal before the month starts and challenge yourself to achieve that goal. The concept is to simply make as many QSO points as possible using QRP and simple wire antennas according to a table of QSO points in the challenge rules. Premium point values are assigned to rag chew type QSO's. A 50 point minimum total is required to satisfy the challenge, but the sky is the limit.

As usual, again this month everyone who completes the challenge and reports their results according to the rules is entered into a drawing to win one of the remaining sets of the bug or paddle handle pieces donated by Gregg WB8LZG. The winner gets to select which variety of pieces he or she needs for their particular bug or paddle. Please let us know when you submit your results if you don't want to be included in the drawing for any reason whatsoever. Otherwise you will be included, and if you win and then aren't interested, we'll have to go through the effort of a second drawing.

The submission deadline for the January challenge came before our last newsletter publication date so we couldn't bring you the final results then. So briefly here they are. 11 submissions came in with K3WWP (1,739) and NU7T (702) reporting the highest point totals and winning the certificates. Rem K6BBQ won the paddle/bug handles drawing.

If you have an idea for a challenge, please let us know and we'll consider it. Thanks to Don VE3HUR and Mike KC2EGL for suggesting some upcoming challenges.

Full Challenge info [here](#).



2. FEBRUARY SPRINT RESULTS: We had another good sprint in February despite horrid band conditions again. 42 of you submitted a log report including three of you who said you

were in there trying but didn't make any QSO's. We're proud of those members who did report their unsuccessful attempts. We hope conditions will turn around for you in March and you'll be near the top instead of at the bottom. We are still averaging over 50 reports per sprint for the last few months despite the slight downturn this month caused by the very poor conditions. That's due to you, our wonderful members and we appreciate it, as contests and sprints are a great way to show that CW is still alive and well. The more participants, the greater the show.

Here's a comment from Chas W2SH about our log cross-checking procedure:

"Thanks John, ... There is no question that the time you spend cross-checking received logs makes for a more accurate presentation of the sprint outcomes. More important, though many may not perceive it, is that it makes me a better operator. I've pieced together how my error occurred. During the sprint I overheard K6BFA give his exchange and I made a written note of what he said. A couple of days later when I was going through my notebook I saw my K6BFA notes, but there was no time noted. Woops, I said, there's a QSO and I just forgot to record the time, the very first thing I write down whenever a QSO starts. So I winged it and added a time that was about half way between the previous and succeeding QSO times. Chas."

Yes, those things do happen. They're completely unintentional and with no intent to defraud. However they do unfairly alter contest results, and that is why we spend the time doing the cross-checking. I'm really getting the process down to a science now and each sprint requires less and less effort despite the fact each sprint is now producing more logs to cross-check. It's all possible using Microsoft's wonderful Excel spreadsheet and a little thinking and tweaking along the way.

Speaking of Chas estimating the time of his QSO, I'd like to add that the more accurate your QSO times are, the easier it is to cross-check logs since the time is the factor that determines how close both ends of a QSO are listed in the master database and hence the easier to check. So please check your clocks just before a sprint to be sure they are accurate. Remember even computer clocks can drift in time if they are not periodically set against a time standard via the Internet or manually.

STATS - current month, previous month, all time record, mo/yr (blue indicates a record set this month):

Logs -	42	54	57	12/07
Stns in logs -	80	97	99	4/07
Hour 1 QSO's -	231	268	441	8/07
Hour 2 QSO's -	120	313	392	8/07
Total QSO's -	351	581	833	8/07
20M QSO's -	0	1	163	8/07
40M QSO's -	115	316	571	8/07
80M QSO's -	236	264	481	12/07
Autologger logs -	33	48	48	1/08

WINNERS:

1st SWA - AA4W

2nd SWA - n/a

1st Gain - WA2WUH

Special Award (Highest score among those using a hmbw from scratch rig) - W7QQQ

Top Non-Winner - W7QQQ

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because the listing of your results on our web site shows the ham radio world that you are interested in preserving CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

We had 2 stations who didn't submit a log show up from 5 to 9 times in the 42 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully those 2 and many others will be back next month AND submit a log.

We welcome 8 hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:

AJ9ON, K1ULF, KC0VKN, KD8GZ, KE7LKW, KU4A, VE3VVF, W7QQQ

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Those reports are important also.

Full sprint info [here](#).



3. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: Each month in our end-of-the-month newsletter we are going to talk a bit about one of our awards.

We have now featured all of our different awards once in the newsletters, so here is an overview of our entire award program.

Since the NAQCC does not charge dues, it must depend on contributions from members plus awards fees to purchase the things necessary to keep the club running smoothly. Although we must charge for our awards for that reason, we believe in keeping the cost of the awards at a bare minimum. We feel that \$3.00 is very reasonable. The actual costs for an award include \$0.97 cents postage plus the cost of the paper to print them on, a manila folder to protect the award in transit to you, the large envelope in which to mail it, the color ink to print it, and the mailing label. Plus it takes time to put a certificate together and mail it out. The bottom line is that we make very little profit on our awards unlike other organizations. If we charged dues, then the cost of an award would be zilch to you, and would be included in your dues payment.

That's the financial side. As for the awards themselves, we have a very wide and varied selection of awards. Knowing that no two hams think exactly alike, at least one, if not more, of our awards should appeal to just about anyone.

Still even with all these factors, interest in our awards program is at a very low level. I don't know why, and I'd love to have some of you tell me why you are not interested.

Full NAQCC Awards info [here](#).



3a. AWARD WINNERS FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS:

AB0SR - 1000MPW #0036

K3WWP - Eastern division 2007 Participation

NU7T/WY7N (tie) - Western division 2007 Participation

VE3HUR - VE/DX division 2007 Participation

VE3HUR - Free FISTS membership renewal for 2007 Participation overall top non-officer score

K3WWP - QSO-A-Day (full year 2007)
K7ZYV - WAC
KD2MX - WAS

We hope to add your call to the list of award winners soon.

Full List of all award winners [here](#).



4. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- Here's what you are saying about the newsletter: "John, Just want to say how much I appreciate all that you do for qrp/cw and NAQCC. I look forward to these newsletters and the content is great. 73 John, W3FSA". Of course that applies to all officers and members, not just me.
- What do these numbers mean? 2095, 2130, 2246, 2261, 2259. Those are member numbers of our upcoming featured members. They've sent in their picture and bio for use on the web site. What's the significance? Those are all high numbers and newer members. Why won't our older members come forth as well with some pictures and info about themselves? Only NU7T 0434 has a number below 2000 among those featured through July of this year. C'mon you old-time members - don't let these newcomers show you up. Send us your picture and bio.
- I did some work with Paul N8XMS who was having trouble using our autologger. We found one definite problem. I surmised that some kind of over-protective firewall may be at fault. I was right - as soon as Paul temporarily disabled his firewall, the autologger worked just fine. I know that is not the problem in every case, but it's something to try if you get the Windstream/Alltel error message when trying to use the autologger. Paul's firewall incidentally is the CA Internet Security Suite provided by his ISP. If you do try that trick though, be sure to only disable the firewall just long enough to get the form submitted.
- - Some more work was done with another member who was having trouble finding the correct GenLog file to submit to us. It's the one called K3WWP.log in my case or YOURCALL.log in your case that is created from the Log menu in GenLog. However I overlooked one thing. Some computers do not show file extensions for whatever reason. So you may not find a YOURCALL.log file since it would be listed as just YOURCALL with no extension. I hope that clears up some confusion. It certainly did with the member I worked with via LL.
- - It looks to me like Chuck Adams K7QO has discontinued his books in Morse on CD project, as there is no mention at all of them on his current [web site](#) as of February 20. Also an email to Chuck went unanswered about the matter. So our CD's giveaway in conjunction with our sprints is put on hold till we can find out more about the matter.
- - Apparently the ARS Spartan Sprints have lost their status as a contest or sprint since there is no longer any scoring involved with the sprints. It has been suggested that the NAQCC move our sprints into the 1st Monday evening time slot. Well, that will NOT happen. We are established with our schedule now, getting an average of over 50 logs submitted per sprint. Our schedule will stay the same as it is now - period. Anyway the Spartan Sprints are still alive and still occupying that first Monday evening time slot and we at the NAQCC do not step on other folks' events as has been done to us in the past. The ONLY difference in the Spartan Sprints at this time is there is no longer any scoring involved with them. Otherwise they are still alive and well.

● - Not one person responded to this, so we'll repeat it here again, and if there still aren't any responses, I guess we'll drop the idea, and Tom and I will continue to hog the club call to ourselves and have a ball with it.

Tom and I are thinking about loaning our club call out to members for use in our sprints. If that sounds appealing to you, let us know. If we get enough response, we'll set up a plan. If not, well we tried. Just email us, and we'll keep track of the order in which we receive any emails, and the call will be made available on that first come, first served basis. There's no cost, no paperwork, no effort at all. You just sign up and use N3AQC as your call in the sprint. Perhaps we'll assign bonus points for working the club call and you'll be more popular, but in that case we would have to eliminate N3AQC from certificate and award contention to keep things fair. It's all speculation now until we find out if you are interested or not.

● - Remember it is very easy to get to the NAQCC web site. If you can't remember the URL or are at another computer that doesn't have the site bookmarked or in favorites (why not?), simply type 'naqcc' in the browsers address bar or search bar, and click on the first item that shows up. That happens with Internet Explorer and Windows Live for certain, and probably in other browsers and search engines as well. I only use those two here so I don't know for sure.



5. MEMBER NEWS: Humility is a great virtue, but it makes for a dull member news section of the newsletter. How about shedding a bit of that humility and shyness and tell us about your accomplishments with QRP and CW. I'm sure each and every one of our 2,200 plus members has done something noteworthy lately, yet only a couple members at most each month have sent in a news item to us about it. Why so few? All that is necessary is to send a brief description of your accomplishments to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET** so he can convert it into a news item like those here.

● **From Herb WA0YFB #561** - Since you are looking for news for the newsletter I thought I'd write and let you know I get on the air once in a while as WA0YFB/MM from on board the navy ship, USNS Yukon. I'm in the Communications Dept. and like to test our old URT-23D transmitters from time to time. Since they don't like a lot of high power RF around the bridge, I turn down the output of the transmitters and find that QRP power is actually more fun. Lately, I have been hanging around the CW QRP frequencies of 7.040 and 14.060 mhz. 73's and I hope to work a few more stations soon.

● **From Joe W4ONC #2102** - Here are some suggestions for seeing the International Space Station (ISS) from your backyard. The ISS is 240 miles above the Earth and traveling at a speed of 17,500 MPH. NASA has been making additions to it for many years now. The larger it gets the more dominant it is for viewing from your backyard.

How do you know when the ISS will come within your area for viewing? A web site set up by NASA just for tracking the ISS is located at: [NASA ISS Website](#). Be sure to read the section on "Sighting Help". This shows you how to use the information to correctly use the bearings listed for a sighting in your area (Azimuth and Elevation). Also, make sure that your clock or watch is synchronized with WWV because the time listed on this site for viewing in your area is exact. From horizon to horizon the ISS can be seen for only eight minutes due to its speed.

I was talking to a few of my neighbors at dusk one day knowing that the ISS would be coming over soon. I pointed it out when it came over the trees and they were amazed that they could actually see this wonderful creation. To me the ISS is about the size of Venus, if not larger, in the morning sky. The Sun is on the opposite side of the Earth shining its light onto the ISS

which makes it visible to you.

● **From Paul KD2MX #1091** - Every propagation cloud does have a silver lining! Conditions during this past weekend's DX contest seemed to be worse than last year, at least at my QTH. Ten meters dead, no EU on 15, and 20 was a struggle much of the time. Not being a glutton for punishment, I ran low power and even at that I often felt like I was running QRP.

Midday on Sunday, my QSO rate had come almost to a halt. 40M wasn't open yet and there was just a glimmer of SA on 15M. I decided to go out for a couple of hours for a short hike. When I came back, I ran the dial up 20M and came upon a big signal, AL1G. Eureka, it was Alaska!, the bane of my quest for QRP WAS.

It was just a few days earlier that I had gotten an email from Phil, KL8DX, who had read my note in Issue #62 about how I had tried and failed to work him in late December. He apologized for not trying harder to complete the QSO and offered to set up a sked if I still needed AK QRP. I wrote back and told Phil that there was certainly no reason to apologize. He had made a valiant effort but if there's nothing to work with, what can you do? I declined his kind offer for a sked as I preferred letting nature take its course. I figured the propagation gods would eventually deliver AK when the time was right and it would be all the more exciting if it was unscheduled.

Now here was AL1G, S9+ and running a KW. I quickly dialed back my power to 5W and jumped into the fray. A few calls later and I finally had #50 in the logbook, two years, three months, and nine days; and 4000 QSOs after QRP State #1. But I wasn't done. I tuned up 10khz or so and there was KL8DX, not quite as strong as he was running 100W. It took me about 10 minutes to work Phil. Soon after that came a great run of JAs. They were almost as easy to work with 5W as with 100W.

I had convinced myself that I wasn't going to get AK until the sun woke up. But this just goes to show you, who needs sunspots anyway? Now I have to get to work on QRP DXCC, just eight more countries to go. I did try to work VP6DX with 5 watts but was unsuccessful although I did manage four bands at 100W. Working them on 160M on the first call was most exciting but nothing like the great QRP accomplishments as detailed next by N6HI.

● **From John N6HI #642** - I saw a note in the NAQCC NEWS asking for input from members as to what we've "been up to". For this last week I have been giving my QRP station a real workout, chasing the Ducie Island DXpedition!

The gang of operators down on Ducie Island are some of the best in the world, and even during this "poor" part of the solar cycle with NO sunspots appearing on the sun from a week before to, so far, the present, they have provided excellent signals and I have been fortunate to work them on 11 "Band Slots" (bands/modes) all worked with QRP, and NINE of the band slots were worked with 1/2 Watt:

BAND	CW Pwr	SSB Pwr
40M	5W	
30M	0.5W	
20M	0.5W	0.5W
17M	0.5W	0.5W
15M	0.5W	0.5W
12M	0.5W	0.5W

10M

5W

Note that ALL contacts shown above were made using my regular station antenna on all bands and on both modes, CW and SSB. The antenna is a 20 foot piece of hookup wire, with a rock tied to the end, thrown into a tree outside my window. My entire "ham shack" consists of a station that occupies less than one square foot of desk space:



This is the "one square foot" station that N6HI used to work Ducie on 11 Band Modes (from Phoenix, AZ). If you look closely, you can see the green wire coming from the back of the tuner. That is the "rig end" of my 20 foot wire, which is "squished" through the window and thrown into the tree that is right outside the window. I call it my "wonder wire"!

I wonder how many other NAQCC members shared my joy in working this very rare island on the hf bands? As of this writing, the operation still has a few days left to go, and stands poised and ready to have a very high likelihood of breaking the all-time world record for most contacts made on any DXpedition! If a QRPer can attain this level of low-power performance during the sunspot minimum, it sure makes me wonder what we can accomplish in the more sunspot-enriched years that lie ahead?

● **From John, K3WWP #0002** - I just want to comment on a couple of the news stories above. First congrats to all who worked Ducie Island. I didn't even try here as I have been suffering from a kidney stone and haven't felt like doing much ham radio other than keeping my streak alive. For example I only worked 6 stations in the ARRL DX test, quite a come down from the 633 I worked a few years ago. Conditions were good enough this year that I probably could have gotten 200-300 QSO's had I been able to hang in there. I know Ducie would have been easy for me had I tried because that part of the World is easy to work with QRP. I've had very easy QSO's with countries like C2, ZK1, VK, ZL, 3D2, A35, FO0A, FO0C, KH2, KH3, K5K, T32, V63, V73, VK0M, VP6, ZL7, and ZL9 at different stages of the previous sunspot

cycle. But new countries are not a matter of life and death to me as they seem to be to some folks, so.....

As for the ISS, I've been watching satellites for quite some time now. I like the Iridiums that flash brilliantly for a few seconds as the sun glints off the flat mirror-like surface of the satellites. Their flashes are the fourth brightest sights in the sky after the Sun, Moon, and some fireballs. They are many times as bright as Venus at its brightest. It's even possible to see them while the Sun is still in the sky. I'm trying to catch each one of the fleet of 100 or so Iridiums, and am about 2/3 of the way there now. I also enjoy catching the "classic" satellites like an old Atlas Centaur rocket or early Cosmos satellite from not long after the start of the space age. Another favorite was seeing the ISS and Space Shuttle orbiting in formation shortly after separation. I've made some 800 sightings of some 275 or so different satellites. Besides the source mentioned above, the Heavens Above web site is another good source of not only ISS info, but several hundred other satellites as well. Free registration is required, and after that you can get a listing of all satellites visible from your QTH sorted in various ways and for different time frames. See the Heavens Above site [here](#). The site also includes info on comets, planets, asteroids, and other celestial objects.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the [archives](#).

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the [NAQCC Web Site](#).